

MINUTES
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission Meeting
Red Lion Colonial Inn – 2301 Colonial Drive
Helena, MT
DECEMBER 20, 2007

Commission Members Present: Steve Doherty, Chairman; Shane Colton, Vice-Chair; Vic Workman; Dan Vermillion; Willie Doll.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Jeff Hagener, Director, and FWP Staff.

Guests: See December 20, 2007 Commission file folder for those who signed in.

Topics of Discussion:

1. **Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance**
2. **Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes of November 29, 2007**
3. **Approval of Commission Expenses through November, 2007**
4. **2008 Commission Meeting Locations**
5. **Sun River / Lewis Fishing Access Site Land Acquisition – Final**
6. **2008-2009 Hunting Season Dates – Tentative**
7. **2008-2009 Quotas - Tentative**
8. **2008-2009 Deer, Elk and Antelope Seasons and HD Boundaries – Tentative**
9. **2008/2009 Lion Seasons and HD Boundaries – Tentative**
10. **2008-2009 Upland Game Bird and Turkey Seasons and Quotas - Tentative**
11. **2008-2009 Wolf Seasons and Boundaries – Tentative**
12. **2008-2009 Moose, Sheep and Goat Seasons and HD Boundaries – Tentative**
13. **2008-2009 Black Bear Seasons, HD Boundaries and Quotas – Tentative**
14. **2008-2009 Game Damage Permit Authorizations – Tentative**
15. **Resolution on Delisting and Funding for Grizzly Bears**
16. **Open Microphone – Public Opportunity to Address Additional FWP Issues**

Director Hagener introduced Mike Gurnett, FWP Film Production Supervisor, who showed a beautiful outdoor power point presentation.

1. Opening - Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Doherty called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of November 29, 2007 Commission Meeting Minutes.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the November 29, 2007 minutes. Motion carried.

3. Approval of November, 2007 Commission Expenses.

Action: Workman moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the November expenses as presented. Motion carried.

4. 2008 Commission Meeting Locations – Final. After discussion, it was decided to hold the May meeting in Glendive to coincide with paddlefish opening day, the July meeting at Lone Pine State Park in Region 1, and the September meeting in Hamilton. The February meeting was also rescheduled for February 20.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to hold the May meeting in Glendive, the July meeting at Lone Pine State Park, and the September meeting in Hamilton, and to reschedule the February meeting to February 20. Motion carried.

5. Sun River / Lewis Fishing Access Site Land Acquisition – Final. Chris Hunter, FWP Fisheries Division Administrator, explained that this project was approved in 2005, but due to unforeseen title issues that arose, the project was delayed. The Department is now bringing it back before the commission to bring everyone up to speed and to request re-approval.

The Lewis Property is a 134-acre property located along the Sun River, approximately four miles west of Vaughn and fourteen miles northwest of Great Falls. FWP would purchase the Lewis Property using \$185,000 from Access Montana and Fishing Access Acquisition Funds to develop a fishing access site. There is a large pond that could make a great kids fishing pond, and the project has received a lot of support.

Action: Doherty moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the acquisition of the Lewis property for \$185,000 using Fishing Access Acquisition and Access Montana funds.

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Ken McDonald, FWP Wildlife Division Administrator, Jeff Herbert, FWP Wildlife Division Assistant Administrator, and Quentin Kujala, FWP Wildlife Division Management Bureau Chief, presented the Wildlife proposals.

**The proposals are all tentative proposals. Forty-four public meetings will be held statewide, and the proposals will be listed on the FWP website. Comments must be submitted in writing to FWP by February 1, 2008.**

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6. 2008-2009 Hunting Season Dates – Tentative. Two options were discussed. To remain status quo or to establish fixed season dates. Season dates are currently adopted biennially for all game species. This happens every other winter with tentative adoptions in December, and final adoptions in February. These dates are a combination of fixed dates (mountain grouse; Sept 1 – Dec 15) and “formula” dates (general deer and elk; counting backwards five weeks from Thanksgiving Sunday). For the “formula” dates, there is an annual change due to the progression of the calendar from one year to another. That means at least one day’s difference and, periodically, nearly a full week. In some cases, these annual movements can place season dates in conflict with public expectations or traditions.

Fixed dates may represent as much consistency as a biennial date. The advantage would be fixed dates for both years of the biennium. Additionally, fixed dates would prevent the general deer and elk rifle season from ending any earlier than Nov. 30. Expanding youth hunting opportunities on the third Thursday and Friday in October, occurring immediately before general rifle season, and a youth pheasant weekend prior to the general pheasant season was also discussed. Overlap with the archery season was a concern however.

Action: Doll moved to adopt both season date types, inclusive of pheasants, as tentative proposals to present to the public for comment. Workman moved to amend the motion to include mountain lion season be consistent with the deer and elk archery opening dates. Vermillion seconded the motion.

Kujala stated that since there is no an archery-only season for lions, there would be concerns, that this has been discussed before. This would impact the percentage of allocated take.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Vito Quatara suggested a Saturday opening date for general big game season. Fixed dates create problems in that some folks cannot take time off work, and kids are in school during the week.

Greg Munther, Big Sky Upland Bird Association, urged adding block management areas for bird hunting opportunities.

Gary Carvajal, Montana Bowhunter's Association, said fixed dates will create a drop in youth participation. Weekend hunting is important. Opening day is important. Leave the dates status quo.

Paul Rubright, Big Sky Upland Bird Association, said they passed a resolution for early youth pheasant and block management. There is a youth waterfowl hunt. Hen in bag he is "not crazy about". If it doesn't work well, don't do it anymore.

Larry Copenhaver, Montana Wildlife Federation, said there is no reason to change the way it is. Counting back from Thanksgiving works well. Several members feel lack of consistency with fixed dates, and do not feel there is justification for fixed seasons. They support the youth pheasant opener. Block management cooperators could work that out.

Gabe Roffe, Belgrade, is against loss of later season opportunity and said not to shorten the season on the tail end due to weather.

Director Hagener said fixed dates always start and end on the same dates.

Robert Wood – Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association, wants the fall mountain lion season to start the same time as fall archery season. There is opportunity for archers and it would be legal.

Vermillion asked why the season opens on Sunday as opposed to Saturday. Kujala replied there is a long history with that topic. A couple of years ago it was proposed to open big game season on Saturday, but it was defeated. Hagener stated that it was proposed in the legislature and failed there as well. One of the primary reasons cited was that Saturday is used for scouting and setting up camp.

Action on Motion: Motion carried. Four in favor – one opposed (Colton).

7. 2008-2009 Quotas – Tentative. This proposal is to incorporate a range of quotas into the biennial season setting process. Season structures (dates, license types) are currently adopted biennially for all big game species. This happens every other winter with tentative adoptions in December, and final adoptions in February. Quotas (numbers of licenses and permits) are currently adopted annually in late spring and summer to take advantage of annual survey information gathered the preceding winter and spring. This proposal is a request for FWP to internally set a quota without going through the process of the two commission meetings as long as the specified range is adhered to.

Colton expressed concern over significant ranges listed in some districts. Kujala agreed that some of the ranges are large. He said the defaults start with 10-year range, and if the Commission likes the concept but not the range numbers, a 5-year range could be used instead. He said it would save time to do this, and would provide more leeway to get the regulations printed and drawings done.

Action: Workman moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to adopt the tentative quota ranges and biennial process as proposed. Motion carried. Three in favor – two opposed (Colton and Doherty opposed).

8. 2008-2009 Deer, Elk and Antelope Seasons and HD Boundaries – Tentative.

Region 1 - Deer

HD 170 - Adjust boundary of deer/elk HD 170 and increase 170-10 OTC antlerless white-tailed deer license limit per hunter from 1 to 5.

Implement Libby Archery Only Hunting Area.

Eliminate Antlerless Mule Deer Permits 100-60, 103-60, 104-60, 121-60, 122-60, 123-60.

Replace with the following Antlerless Mule Deer B Licenses:

100-01	50 licenses
103-01	50 licenses
104-01	50 licenses
109-01	50 licenses
121-01	50 licenses
122-01	50 licenses
123-01	25 licenses

Eliminate Old Steel and Stillwater hunting closures.

Licensed hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" (PTHFVP) added to youth 5-week either sex white-tailed deer opportunity.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the tentative Region 1 Deer proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 2 - Deer

HD 212 - Expand antlerless mule deer B licenses (212-00) to all of HD 212 and increase to 100.

HD 214 - Implement unlimited mule deer buck permits.

HDs 202, 210, 212, 213 and 216 - Eliminate antlerless white-tailed B licenses 202-02, 210-00, 212-01, 213-00, 216-00.

HDs 291, 292, 293 and 298 - Create new deer/elk HD 298 comprised of HD290, and portions of HD's 292, 291, and 293. In portion of HD298 designate Special Weapons Restriction Area corresponding with current HD290 where hunting for deer will continue to be Archery Only. Existing season structure and dates for HD 290 would continue in that corresponding Special Weapons Restriction Area of HD 298. Within remaining portion of proposed HD 298, FWP proposes to establish the following deer hunting season structure:

Sep 6 – Oct 19	-- Either-sex White-tailed Deer. Archery Only Season.
Oct 26 – Nov 2	-- Either-sex White-tailed Deer.

Oct 26 – Nov 30 -- Either-sex White-tailed Deer. Only Youth ages 12-15.

Nov 2 – Nov 30 -- Antlered Buck White-tailed Deer.

Special Permit. Drawing only. Apply by June 1.

002-10: Single Region B license for White-tailed deer valid in HD 298.

298-40: Unlim. Permits. Permit must be used with a valid Deer A License. Holders may not hunt Antlered Buck Mule Deer in any other HD.

- Sep 6 – Oct 19 -- Antlered Buck Mule Deer. Archery Only Season.

- Oct 26 – Nov 30 -- Antlered Buck Mule Deer

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the Region 2 tentative Deer proposals as recommended by the Department.

Gary Carvajal would like the Commission to consider redrawing the boundary lines near the weapons restricted area.

Steve Wilson, Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association, said HDs 261 and 270 are limited entry mule deer tags. He would like the adaptive harvest management plan tightened up and reviewed. He asked that there be no doe permits in HD270 where there is currently a proposed quota of 450 mule deer doe permits as recruitment is dropping.

Steve Kamps, Montana Bowhunter's Association, is concerned about redefining HD290/HD298. He asked that HD290 be left out of HD298 – leave as is now.

Greg Munther requested that HD290 remain archery-only as it has been for over 30 years.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

Region 3 - Deer

HD 309 - Expand HD boundary

HDs 309, 311, 312 and 393 - Clarify/adjust HD boundaries

HD 339 - Adjust HD boundary

HD 388 - Adjust HD boundary and increase 388-10 OTC antlerless mule deer B license limit per hunter from 1 to 7.

Action: Vermillion moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Region 3 tentative Deer proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

Region 4 - Deer

HDs 413 and 445 – implement 500 antlerless white-tailed B licenses valid in HDs 413 and 445 (445-01).

HDs 421 - Implement general ES mule deer season for all of archery and rifle seasons in all of HDs 421.

HD 423 – Eliminate “off of National Forest” limitation relative to ES mule deer harvest

Action: Doherty moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Region 4 tentative Deer proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

Region 5 - Deer

HDs 500, 570 and 580 - Implement general ES mule deer season for all of archery and rifle seasons in all of HDs 500, 570 and 580.

HD 530 - Implement general deer license valid for antlerless mule deer for all of archery and rifle seasons in all of HD 530.

Action: Vermillion moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Region 5 tentative Deer proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

Region 6 – Deer

HDs 600, 610 and 690 - Incorporate all of deer/elk HD 610 into HDs 600 and 690. 550 antlerless mule deer B licenses valid in new HD 600 and 550 antlerless mule deer B licenses valid in new HD 690. HD 610 will be eliminated.

HDs 640, 641 and 670 - Incorporate parts of deer/elk HD 640 into HDs 641 and 670. Season structures in adjusted HDs 640, 641 and 670 will remain as they currently are.

HD 641 – Implement 100 antlerless mule deer B licenses

LPT 698-00 nonresident and 699-00 resident antlerless white-tailed deer B licenses to be combined into one 699-00 with 5000 licenses available.

Action: Doll moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Region 6 tentative Deer proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 7 - Deer

No proposed changes

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Region 7 tentative proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

Elk - Statewide

Adjust elk archery to limited elk archery permits where elk rifle permits are currently limited. HDs include: 410, 417, 620, 621, 622, 700, 701 (Missouri River Breaks EMU) and 401, 403, 411, 412, 420, 425, 426, 441, 447, 450, 455, 500, 502, 510, 511, portion of 520, 530, 570, 575, portion of 580, 590, 702, 704 and 705. In the Missouri River Breaks districts, archery is currently available via unlimited permit. In the other areas, archery is currently available on only a general license.

Under this proposal, other season elements would remain unchanged unless specifically addressed in other proposals. Archery permit applicants would apply first, second or third choice and may hunt elk in other areas/times but may not use the archery permit in the described district during the general rifle season. Rifle permit holders may use a bow during the archery season in the described district. Proposed permit numbers would be fixed and represent 65% of average of 2005, 2006 and 2007 total permit holders (Missouri River Breaks) and 85% of average of 2004, 2005 and 2006 number of estimated total archers (2007 data unavailable).

For comparison and potential consideration of other options, HD 380 (the Elkhorns) offers only one batch of permits (110) available for use during both the archery and rifle season. Other districts (HDs 680 and 690) offer two groups of permits (archery and rifle) with similar finite numbers of each (10 and 15 respectively in HDs 680 and 690).

Archery permits that represent 65% of average of total permits #s from 2005-2007 are:

HD 410/417: 1560

HD 620/621/622: 1080

HD 700/701: 720

Archery permits that represent 85% of average of total archer #s from 2004-2006 are:

HD 401/403: 70

HD 411/511/530: 440

HD 412: 100

HD 420: 50

HD 425: 80

HD 426: 20

HD 441/450: 100

HD 447: 230

HD 455: 30

HD 500: 55

HD 502/510: 40

Portion of HD 520: 55

HD 570: 35

HD 575: 65

HD 580-23: 25

HD 580-24: 40

HD 590-23: 255

HD 590-24: 135

HD 702/704/705: 310

Hagener stated that it is for the Commission to determine if the structure even needs changed at all.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve limited elk archery permits where elk rifle permits are currently limited as recommended by the Department.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment

Gary Carvajal stated that MBA supports the limited entry structure.

Jim Ravindal opposed this tentative. He said it erodes access to public lands. Community stability will be impacted. Managing hunters rather than wildlife won't work.

Dave Kozub said this approach was overwhelmingly killed a few years ago. Even the legislature did not support the idea. He is opposed to it. People are happy with the Breaks as they are. Let PL/PW discuss it.

Bill Galt is concerned about elk harvest. The drawing system limits hunters who know the ground and those landowners who prefer to choose the hunters.

John Grimstad said he hunts the Breaks and would like the residents of Montana to make the decision. He heard from 25-30 people and a Billings sports club who support the archery permit proposals.

Jay Bodner, Montana Stockgrowers, said the populations are over objective and need to be brought down. FWP is to manage animals, not land. This tentative offended everyone. Private land must be brought into the conversation. Archers do a good job of harvesting. He recommends increasing harvest both ways, supports the collaborative process, and recommend this go to the PL/PW council.

John Youngberg, Montana Farm Bureau, said this proposal is premature. Take it to PL/PW first. Is it to control population and force access?

Vito Quataro said harvest objectives are not being met. Allow more rifle permits and give out cow permits. Meet the objectives in other ways. If a rifle hunter has to draw a permit, so should an archer. Resident sportsmen don't really get heard in PL/PW as it is made up of outfitters. He is uncomfortable with what the bowhunters want.

Larry Copenhaver, MWF, said PL/PW has already determined where they are going, and determining quota and licensing may not be their responsibility. Social issues have been there and are building. Crowding has impacted the bulls – there are so many people bugling that they don't respond anymore. He is in favor of a permit system.

Russ Kipp, MOGA, said this tentative has a trickle down effect that will impact all of Montana. There are lots of elk opportunities, and Montanans are mobile. They will move to other areas. PL/PW is the proper place to review this.

Mac Minard, MOGA, said the Elk Summit was outstanding. This proposal was already drafted before the summit. They recommend withdrawing this proposal and allow PL/PW to look at it – they will work with PL/PW.

Deanna Robbins said anxiety has been brought on by this proposal. Non-residents and outfitters are being singled out. Limited permits would do little to affect the situation. FWP has failed to sit down with private landowners.

Daryl Olson said private landowners have tolerance for trophy bulls but not for cow elk. The wildlife are public and are for the good of all people. If the numbers are a problem, set the numbers at historical use.

Sarah Carlson, Montana Conservation District, feels the process on this proposal is not including the landowners. She encouraged FWP to utilize MCD, and to develop a resolution. They are willing to help FWP.

John Wilkinson said the bowhunters he knows are in favor of this proposal. He served on the PL/PW Council for two terms, and recommends sending it to them.

Bill Harris said he posts part of his land, but allows some hunting. He has outfitted the Breaks and CMR, but now does not outfit on federal land. The environment for elk has changed because the lowering of Fort Peck Lake has left tall grass that hides the elk. People who cannot see them on the hillsides think there are none. People need direction on being respectful and courteous. This is imposing the will of a few on everyone, and it will have an effect on the economy. Discard this proposal.

Mary Ellen Schnurr, MOGA, said they are over objective, and there is also a game damage hunt near the Breaks. How many times does this idea have to be killed? It will not generate cooperation between folks, and will destroy small town businesses. PL/PW is the venue for reviewing this.

Billy Lewis, Traditional Bowhunters of Montana, said archery harvest is a non-issue of elk population management. Limitation of hunters should help manage the resource. He urged the Commission to give people not present at this meeting the opportunity to voice an opinion.

Paul Rash said the proposal is based on numbers.

Donna McDonald, MOGA, said she is on the PL/PW Council and they are a fair-minded committee who are willing to take on these challenges.

Jack Billingsley, outfitter and landowner, said limiting the permits would have an impact on them. An option of two seasons and weapons should be proposed. He asked the Commission to withdraw this tentative proposal.

Mark Robbins feels it is a threat to his private ownership and will reduce public access. The Bowhunter's Association is trying to kick out the non-residents.

Jean Johnson said this issue came from SB134 to limit non-residents from hunting on public land. This tentative has a lot to do with social issues that do not belong in this forum. Opportunity must be provided. All stakeholders must be committed and must respect differing views. PL/PW is the proper place to discuss this issue. She asked that the Commission consider tabling this proposal.

Bill Skov, MBA, said elk numbers are diminishing. It is difficult for a resident hunter since 40 percent goes to non-residents.

Paul Ellis doesn't think it is an issue of access, but of easy access. If people get out and walk, they can see elk. CMR and BLM have limited road use. He suggested the Commission table this proposal and give it to PL/PW for their consideration.

Derek Elvid asked that this be tabled. It will adversely impact business owners.

Keith Meckling, MOGA, said he outfits to help support his ranch. This would be a blow to them personally and to the city of Winifred.

Colton said PL/PW is dealing with broader issues, however they can still be involved and address this as it moves forward. The open border policy brings an excessive spillover for sportsmen. He is sensitive to financial impact and to the Missouri Breaks Herd of elk. This issue has been addressed many times because it is important to many other people, and it needs to be presented in these forums.

Doll said the non-resident permits have gone up 180. This needs to go out for public comment. The lake has gone down forty feet so there are many willows. Much of the conflict is brought on by Montana bowhunters.

Vermillion said this issue involves people's livelihoods. It is important that the public become engaged. He supports this proposal at this time, and agreed it must go out for public comment.

Doherty said people need to talk to one another. He is concerned about the health of the herd. It must go out for comment.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

Action: Colton moved and Workman seconded the motion that for the areas identified as Missouri River Breaks (HDs 410, 417, 620, 621, 622, 700 and 701) we apply 75% of last years historic use for either sex permits and further we go to a factor of 90% for other identified districts outside of the breaks and unlimited archery permit for antlerless for both sections, and be required to apply for a permit.

Herbert clarified unlimited antlerless is by drawing and by second choice.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Russ Kipp stated that outfitters have already booked or are in the process of booking clients, that non-residents need to get their licenses. Most outfitters are booked before licenses sell. If the Commission sets regulations in March, there is not much time to book so there may need to be a year grace period. He asked if there will be refund provisions in place for the clients already booked for this upcoming year.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

Action: Workman moved and Vermillion seconded the motion that the tentatives for the upcoming season status quo for the upcoming year.

Kujala clarified that this tentative adoption will be for two years.

Neil Whitney, FWP License Analyst, said the Department has an existing refund policy where all but \$100 is refunded. The Director can make exceptions.

Mark Robbins said the Commission already approved the variable priced licenses. Most people won't know until August. Businesses need to be considered.

John Wilkinson said this is fair to the outfitters, and if not approved, there will a lot less tags sold.

Mary Ellen Schnurr said nobody thinks about non-resident without an outfitter or guide. Will they know that they might not get to hunt before August?

Daryl Olson said the Commission should not worry about preference to out-of-staters as residents also have to drive a long way when traveling across the large state of Montana. Out-of-staters should not receive preference.

Action on Motion: Motion failed. One in favor – four opposed. (Workman in favor)

Region 1 - Elk

No proposed changes

Action: Moved and seconded to approve Region 1 Elk tentatives as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 2 - Elk

Offer unlimited A9/B12 licenses over-the-counter for archery only during the archery only season region-wide. Commit to monitoring nonresident participation relative to 10% cap intent and consistency. The archery A9/B12 283-80 would be eliminated.

HD 202 - Eliminate antlerless permits 202-02.

HDs 204, 261 and 270 - Replace A7 licenses with antlerless permits in HDs 204, 261 and 270. General license antlerless harvest in HDs 204, 261 and the north half of HD 270 would close when a quota of 200 cow elk from HD 270 is checked at Darby Check Station.

General license antlerless harvest in the south half of HD 270 would close when a quota of 300 cow elk from HD 270 is checked at Darby Check Station. Proposed antlerless permits are:

HD 204-00 5 permits

HD 261-00 25 permits

HD 261-01 valid only north of Birch Creek 50 permits

HD 270-00 75 permits

HD 270-01 125 permits

HDs 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 216, 282, 283, 284, 285 and 290 - Replace antlered bull regulation with brow-tined bull in. Either sex would be stated as brow-tined bull or antlerless.

HDs 210, 212, 213, 215, 216, 281, 283, 285, 291, 292 and 293 - Implement 7 day general license antlerless elk season from third Monday to fourth Sunday of rifle season and eliminate A9/B12 in HD 213 and combine 212-00 and 212-01 into 212-00 valid for all of HD 212.

Propose antlerless permits are:

210-00 200 permits

212-00 300 permits

213-00 150 permits

215-00 150 permits

215-01 50 permits
216-00 25 permits
216-01 100 permits
281-00 100 permits
285-20 50 permits
285-21 200 permits
283-00 250 permits
291-00 100 permits
292-00 150 permits
293-0 50 permits

HDs 240 and 250 - Eliminate all A7 licenses in HDs 240 and 250 and adjust HD 240 and 250 general season to season-long brow-tined bull with 200 antlerless elk permits in HD 240 and 50 antlerless elk permits in HD 250 (valid only in northeast portion of district).

HD 280 - Start brow-tined bull or antlerless season in backcountry HD 280 September 29 instead of start of general season.

HD 282 - Replace A7 licenses with 75 antlerless elk permits.

HD 283 - Adjust boundary of 283-02 for antlerless permits in Rattlesnake Wilderness Area.

HDs 291, 292, 293 and 298 - Create new elk/deer HD 298 from pieces of HDs 291, 292 and 293. Designate the East Ovando Archery-only Area as a weapons restricted area for elk hunting. General archery and rifle season would be brow-tined bull or antlerless elk with 100 total A9/B12 licenses offered via the drawing.

Hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added to general elk license youth opportunities.

Action: Vermillion moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the Region 2 tentative Elk proposals as recommended by the Department.

Steve Wilson said the public was not privy to these recommendations until a couple of days ago. Elk archery-only areas where you cannot use rifle means private owners. Might not have extra elk for archery hunting.

Rod Bullis asked if there were permits available. If no hunters in the first couple of weeks, then void permits and go to a season.

Tony Jones, Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association, said there is a 22,000-acre ranch in the district with a resident elk herd. They requested a flight of that ranch and counted 806 elk prior to hunting season. FWP is not following the management plan in that area. He recommended changing from a liberal package to a standard package.

Mike Giles, a disabled hunter, said to allow cow elk in the same area as you can usually shoot.

John Riggs said roads are closed from October to December, and he is in favor.

Steve Kamps suggested leaving HD290 open as its own district.

Tim Ravndal said he is concerned with access for handicapped and youth hunting opportunities.

Action on Motion: Motion carried

Region 3 - Elk

HD 300 - Implement 5 week ES general season and 250 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing.

HD 301 - Reduce brow-tined bull or antlerless general season from 5 weeks to the first two weeks of general rifle season.

HD 310 - Implement unlimited brow-tined bull permits for archery and rifle seasons.

HD 312 - Implement 100 A9/B12 licenses valid on private lands through drawing.

HD 314 - Implement 1000 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing.

HDs 315 and 393 - Implement unlimited A9/B12 licenses and commit to monitoring nonresident participation relative to 10% cap intent and consistency.

HDs 319 and 341 - Reduce brow-tined bull or antlerless general season to 2 weeks from third Monday to fifth Sunday of general rifle season and add brow-tined bull or antlerless permits in 319-10 (300 permits) and 341-10 (175 permits).

HDs 320 and 333 - Implement 5 week ~~ES~~ brow-tined bull or antlerless general season and 800 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing.

HD 321 - Implement 5 week ES general season and eliminate ES permits 321-00.

HDs 322-327 and 330 - Implement 5 week ~~ES~~ brow-tined bull or antlerless general season and 3000 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing.

HD 328 - Implement 5 week ES general season.

HD 329 - Reduce either sex general season to 2 weeks from third Monday to fifth Sunday of general rifle season and add 350 ES permits.

HD 331 - Reduce either sex general season to 2 weeks from third Monday to fifth Sunday of general rifle season and add 400 ES permits.

HDs 360 and 362 - Implement Madison Special Management Area and 200 antlerless permits (398-10) for use with general license or A9/B12 (398-80) in Madison Special Management Area for five 7-day intervals (40 permits per period). Hunt Orientation required for permit validation. Would eliminate all late hunts and remove private land designation of A9/B12 licenses.

Hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added to general elk license youth opportunities.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Region 3 tentative Elk proposals as recommended by the Department.

Discussion followed regarding changing HD314 and 315 to brow-tine bulls and/or antlerless, and about redefining the Madison Special Management Area.

Tim Beardsley said there is a high number of elk in his area. Outfitters in the area kill them. He is a guide. Boundary does not de-privatize the pack hunting. This proposal leaves out 4,300 acres of ground. He would like to see the boundary changed.

Action on Motion: Colton amended his motion to include the expansion of the Madison Special Management Area and change HD314 and HD315 from either sex to brow-tine bull or antlerless, and to direct FWP to generate a new boundary description for the Madison Valley Special Management Area. Motion carried.

Region 4 - Elk

HD 410 - Reduce antlerless elk permits (410-00) from 400 to 200 and reduce either sex elk rifle permits (410-20) from 75 to 55 and eliminate A9/B12 licenses (410-80) and eliminate general license antlerless elk hunting for youth.

HDs 413, 418, 432 and 454 - Implement 5 week ES general season with A9/B12 licenses through drawing and eliminate antlerless licenses.

HDs 418 and 448 - Adjust boundary between HD 418 and 448 (for elk and deer).

HD 417 - Increase antlerless elk permits (417-00) from 350 to 400 and issue 300 A9/B12 antlerless elk licenses (417-80) through drawing. A9/B12 licenses valid south of the DY Trail and Knox Ridge Rd and exclude the CMR refuge.

HD 422 - Implement 350 total A9/B12 licenses (422-80) through drawing and valid throughout HD.

HD 425 - Eliminate either sex permits (425-20) and implement additional week of antlerless permits. Adjust antlerless permit levels as follows:

425-00: 25 permits

425-01: 30 permits

425-02: 35 permits

425-03: 35 permits

HD 442 - Implement 400 total A9/B12 licenses (442-80) through drawing and valid throughout HD.

HD 448 - Implement full 5-week antlered bull season (remove 9-day ES) and increase antlerless permits (448-00) from 100 to 200.

HDs 449 and 452 - Implement 5 week ES general season.

HD 450 - Increase antlerless permits from 30 to 50 and remove A9/B12 licenses.

Region 4 Multi-District A9/B12 - Limit total A9/B12 licenses to 2200 through drawing. Valid in all R4 districts except 401, 410, 411, 412, 417, 420, 422, 441, 442, 447, 448, 450, and 455. HDs 401, 403, 412, 417, 426, 441, 447 - Youth (12 - 15) General License Antlerless Elk opportunity; Hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Region 4 tentative Elk proposals as recommended by the Department.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Mary Ellen Schnurr said this proposal removed youth opportunities in HD410.

Graham Taylor replied that the region has seen substantial harvest by youth.

Bill Berg, CMR, said the Department and CMR have had a successful youth hunt in the 600 district. They support removing the current youth hunt in HD410, establishing an early limited draw for youth on the south side like the current one existing on the north side.

Greg Duncan, landowner in HD441, said he wants to make a season change to 441. He proposes holding a 380-type of elk season. There are very few branch antlered bulls there. He asked for a season that would be for spikes only.

Graham Taylor, said the Department chose not to pursue the refuge's recommendation. The choice would be to carve out a certain amount of permits.

Action on Motion: Motion carried. Three in favor – one opposed. (Vermillion).

Region 5 - Elk

HD 520 – Convert antlered bull permits (520-40) to either sex (520-21).

HD 540 - Implement 5 week ES general season and eliminate antlerless permits and implement 50 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing only valid on Private and DNRC lands and not valid on FWP Wildlife Management Areas.

HD 560 - Implement 50 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid west of the Main Boulder River outside Natl Forest Boundary.

HD 580 – Increase existing total A9/B12 licenses through drawing from 150 to 300.

HD 590-80 – Implement 65 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid in HD 590 north of Yellowstone River and portion of HD 701 north of Yellowstone River, south of HWY 12 and west of Sumatra-Myers Road.

HD 590-81 – Implement 35 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid in HD 590 south of Yellowstone River.

Hunters with "Permit to Hunt From a Vehicle" added to general elk license youth opportunities.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Region 5 tentative Elk proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 6 – Elk

HD 620 – Allow antlerless permits in HDs 621 and 622 to be valid in HD 620 and eliminate antlerless permits 620-00.

HD 621 – Implement 100 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid in HDs 621 and 620 during archery and rifle season and allow antlerless elk rifle permits in HD 621 to be valid for all of HD 621 in one LPT 621-01 (550 permits)

HD 622 – Implement 300 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid for HDs 622 and 620 during archery and rifle season.

HDs 620, 621 and 622 - Allow youth antlerless elk rifle permits (621-00) to be valid for all of HDs 620, 621 and 622 during the 3-day early youth season, and throughout the following general season.

HDs 630, 631 and 632 - Allow youth antlerless elk rifle permits (631-01) to be valid for all of HDs 630, 631 and 632 during the 3-day early youth season, and throughout the following general season

HD 630 – Implement 100 total A9/B12 licenses through drawing valid for HDs 630, 631, and 632 during archery and rifle season.

HDs 680 and 690 - Eliminate 680-80 antlerless A9/B12 licenses (50) and increase the 690-80 antlerless A9/B12 licenses from 100 to 200, also valid in HD 680. Also make 690-00 Youth antlerless permits (25) valid in HD 680 and add 50 antlerless elk permits in HD 690 for the General Rifle Season (690-01), also valid in HD 680.

Action: Vermillion moved and Doll seconded the motion to approve the Region 6 tentative Elk proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

Region 7 - Elk

No proposed changes

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Region 7 tentative Elk proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

Marvin Mace, Helena sportsman, said he was instrumental in the success of a legislative bill that provided the Commission the authority to set waiting periods between successfully drawing tags for elk in trophy areas, particularly the Elkhorns. He said in 2005, 5,000 people applied for first choice permits, of which 39 were landowners. Ninety permits went to general public. The odds for landowners are better than for the public. Ten applicants received permits in multiple years for either-sex tags. He is not opposed to the three-year waiting period, but would prefer to see a 7-year waiting period.

Action: Colton moved and Doherty seconded the motion to approve a 4-year waiting period in limited draw areas that have a success rate below 10%..

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Darin Olson said he supports this limited draw. It is an issue of fairness, landowners should be treated the same.

Larry Copenhaver, MWF, said their board supports this waiting period on trophy elk districts. It makes it fair for everyone, and makes moose, sheep, and trophy elk all the same

Action on Motion: Motion carried

Antelope - Statewide

Replace unlimited 900 archery antelope licenses to 4,200 licenses available through the drawing (Regions 3 – 7). This number would be fixed and represents 85% of average of 2005, 2006 and 2007 total permit holders.

Clarify total number of antelope licenses an individual may hold to three, only one of which may be an either sex license. This would allow an individual to potentially purchase three surplus antelope licenses.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Statewide Antelope proposals as recommended by the Department with an increase of licenses from 4,200 to 4,500.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Gary Carvajal, MBA, said they are behind this idea because a high percentage of non-residents are hunting the antelope. They did not anticipate the consequences that have come about. They want this to be a limited draw.

Mary Ellen Schnurr said there is no biological justification for this proposal. Most people with these licenses are not guided. Archery Hunters have increased. It is unwarranted to limit licenses.

Larry Copenhaver concurred with Mary Ellen Schnurr on the biological justification, but not on the issue that the limit of licenses is unwarranted. He said there are many reasons to reexamine this issue.

Paul Ellis said FWP information on exclusive leased acreage is inaccurate. Many of the 50,000 acres that were enrolled in block management have dropped out, not due to the antelope archery but due to other reasons.

Tim Ravndal cautioned the Commission that as restrictions are imposed, youth opportunities may be taken away.

Deana Robbins said these issues are becoming more and more non-resident issues. The proposed antelope regulations restrict non-residents. The Commission has limited opportunity today.

John Wilkinson said he knows that FWP is relied upon for information, and he hopes no bad decisions were made when he served on the PL/PW Council due to bad information.

Action on Motion: Motion carried. Four in favor – one opposed. (Doll opposed).

Region 2 - Antelope

HD 291 - Add new hunting district 291 with 3 either sex licenses (291-00) and 5 doe/fawn licenses (291-10) with same boundary as Deer/Elk HD 291.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the Region 2 tentative Antelope proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 3 - Antelope

HD 310 - Increase 310-00 Either-sex licenses from 175 to 200 and 310-10 Doe/fawn licenses from 100 to 150.

HD 311 - Adjust boundary where doe/fawn licenses are valid to include portion of HD South and West of Interstate 90.

HD 338 - Offer successful antelope ES 338-00 applicants opportunity to purchase a single Doe/Fawn 338-30 license valid in 338 during the Archery Only Season and the General Antelope Season.

HD 341 - Add 75 Doe/Fawn licenses (341-10). Single licenses will be offered to successful Either-sex Antelope license holders in this HD.

HD 380 - Adjust boundary to accommodate new HD 388 and eliminate a series of licenses (380-01) which were formerly valid in the area proposed to be the new 388.

HD 381 - Adjust boundary to accommodate new HD 388 and eliminate Doe/Fawn licenses and adjust Either Sex permit level to 25.

HD 388 - Create new HD 388 with 50 Either Sex licenses (388-00) and 100 Doe/Fawn licenses (388-10). Hunting restricted to archery equipment, shotgun, traditional handgun, muzzleloader or crossbow only, EXCEPT on lands that are specifically excluded from the weapons restrictions. Map available at FWP and license providers in Helena

Action: Vermillion moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Region 3 tentative Antelope proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 5 - Antelope

HDs 570, 571 and 572 - Combine the three adjacent antelope hunting districts into a new HD 570. Hunters who draw an either sex antelope license in HD 570 may be given the opportunity to purchase up to two additional doe/fawn licenses depending on population levels.

Action: Colton moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Region 5 tentative Antelope proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Regions 4, 6, and 7 - Antelope

No changes to Regions 4 and 7.

HDs 620 and 690 - Adjust the boundary between HD 620 and 690 to conform to Boundaries for Deer/Elk HDs 621, 680 and 690.

Action: Doll moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the Regions 4, 5 and 7 tentative antelope proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried. Four in favor – one opposed (Workman opposed).

9. 2008/2009 Lion Seasons and HD Boundaries – Tentative.

Statewide - Lions

Set harvest quota during Fall Season Without Dogs no more than 20% of total district(s) quota.

Allow any lion license holder to hunt without dogs during Fall Season in any lion HD with an open Fall Season. This would eliminate validation requirement for Fall Season.

Adjust limited entry language. The title “Permit” would be eliminated. Hunters would either purchase a lion license over-the-counter in general quota areas OR apply for/obtain a lion license via the drawing in limited entry areas.

Action: Workman moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the tentative statewide Mountain Lion Seasons and HD Boundaries.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Mary Ellen Schnurr said she supports tentative proposal and appreciates the Commission’s hard work. The outfitters are residents.

Gary Carvajal wants the Commission to consider opening lion season the same time as archery season.

Tim Ravndal applauded the idea of changing quotas to increase opportunities to pursue lions. He said it is difficult to identify females from males.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

Region 1 - Lions

No recommended changes.

Workman recommended a 3-year waiting period before those who are successful in the drawings could draw again, and to include the provision for bonus points.

Kujala said a waiting period is not available according to statute, but bonus points are.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to institute a bonus point system for Mountain Lions.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Don Clark supporting this proposal.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

Region 2 - Lions

Eliminate Blackfoot Special Lion Permit Area (BLSPA). Lands formerly encompassed by the BLSPA would be incorporated into HD 292 and the proposed new HD 298. Lion quota levels would be managed consistent with the current season structure; a quota of 4 male lions annually harvested in the combined HDs 298 (proposed), 292, and 291.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the elimination of the Blackfoot Special Lion Permit Area as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion for Region 2 to go to limited draw entry for Mountain Lions and to institute a bonus point system.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Cal Brewer, Ravalli County Houndsmen's Association, wants to see the lions treated with dignity.

Rod Bullis supports limited entry as it brings equality and equity to the lion community. People will not be taking lions year after year unless they draw.

Ben Lamb, MWF, supports the permit system

Tagge Viter is against permits. He hunts just as hard even if quota is reached. If the harvest goes over the quota, take another one off the next year's quota.

Tony Knuchel opposes permits. It's not a good way to manage lions. The permit system takes opportunities from hunters.

Don Clark said since the limited entry permits were passed in Region 1, abuse and the race have been reduced, and it has curbed illegal outfitting. It is equality of the hunt – you have the full season to hunt. Science is the management basis. He encourages permits in Region 2.

George Frisby from Seeley Lake said lions cannot be managed the same in both regions.

Scott from Whitehall is opposed to the permit system.

Tim Ravndal is opposed to the proposal. He said it will lead to illegal kills and lions left lying on the ground because some hunters only want to kill a big one.

Worth Nixon said he will be pressured to shoot a cat.

Grover Hedrick oppose the proposal. The first step in losing chases is because of enforcement.

Scott Adler is opposed to permits. He said to get up early in the morning and its not a race issue.

Bill Weimer said he has seen more game wardens than hunters. Does not want permits.

Chris Rime said Region 2 is different - he is opposed to a permit system. It will be difficult to get a future generation of houndsmen.

Marvin Smith from Clinton is opposed to permits. They will affect future generations. He wants to know every day he has a chance.

Reamer is opposed to permits. His kids will have to wait and will lose interest.

Brad Schultz is opposed to permits.

Workman stated that the Commission heard the same arguments when Region 1 went to the permit system, and it has been a success. Houndsmen who were against it have since thanked him for it.

Mike Thompson, FWP Region 2 Wildlife Manager, said the quota system has worked well. The quota system became a predictable means.

Jim Williams, FWP Region 1 Wildlife Manager, said the permit system has been successful, however Region 1 does not have the private landowner issues that Region 2 has.

Action on Motion: Motion carried. (Workman's motion)

10. 2008-2009 Upland Game Bird and Turkey Seasons and Quotas – Tentative. Jeff herbert
Statewide

Clarify that falconry limits are NOT in addition to hunting bag and possession limits.

Action: Workman moved and Doll seconded the motion to approve the tentative Statewide Upland Game Bird regulations as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

Regions 1, 2 and 3 - Turkey

Lincoln County – Implement over-the-counter either sex licenses for Fall Season and propose 400 Gobbler permits for Spring.

West Sanders County – Implement over-the-counter either sex licenses for Fall Season and propose 300 Gobbler permits for Spring.

East Sanders County – No Fall Season and propose 10 Gobbler permits for Spring.

Mineral County – Implement Fall Season with permits and increase permits as follows:

282-20: Issue 25 Male Turkey Permits for Spring Season (Shotgun/Archery Only)

282-50: Issue 25 Either-sex Turkey Permits for Fall Season (Shotgun/Archery Only)

Missoula County - Implement Fall Season with permits and increase permits as follows:

283-20: Issue 50 Male Turkey Permits for Spring Season (Shotgun/Archery Only)

283-50: Issue 50 Either-sex Turkey Permits for Fall Season (Shotgun/Archery Only)

Ravalli County – Remove Ravalli County from General License Area in regulations; maintain permit structure.

HD 365 – Implement new HD that is Lewis and Clark and Broadwater Counties (Lower Missouri Unit); Spring permits would be 20 (365-20) and 2 (365-21); Fall permits would be 25 (365-50) and 2 (365-51).

HD 375 - Implement new HD that is Gallatin County and Madison County east of Madison River (Gallatin County Unit); Spring permits would be 5 (375-20) and 2 (375-21); Fall permits would be 10 (375-50) and 2 (375-51).

HD 385 – No change.

HD 395 – Implement new HD that is Beaverhead, Silver Bow, Jefferson Counties and Madison County west of Madison River (Upper Missouri Unit); Spring permits would be 15 (395-20) and 2 (395-21); Fall permits would be 20 (395-50) and 2 (395-51).

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the tentative Turkey proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

11. 2008-2009 Wolf Seasons and Boundaries – Tentative. The final decision on the delisting of wolves is to be determined by the end of February, after which it will become the state's responsibility if they are delisted. The Wolf Management Plan that was finalized in 2003, and approved by the USFWS in 2004. The Plan consists of an adaptive framework. There are three management units in Montana – Northern, Western, and Southwestern – which are biologically based. The current estimate is 85 packs and 400 wolves – 37 breeding pairs. The Plan calls for 15 breeding pairs. The goal is to fold wolves into the traditional wildlife management process. It is premature to establish numbers. This proposal is only for the structure. The Wolf Advisory Council advised caution, and

recommended no trapping for at least one year. The purpose is to stabilize the wolf population rather than reduce it.

Action: Workman moved to approve the wolf season structure as proposed by the Department. No second to the motion. Motion failed.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to accept the season and quotas recommendations by the Wolf Advisory Council including a one-year moratorium on trapping.

Chairman Doherty asked for public comment.

Derek Goldman, Endangered Species Coalition, said hunting wolves will eventually be a part of management, however it is premature. He is concerned about what the other two states will do. The effects of hunting are unknown on their social structure. They are social animals. Many questions will surface when one breeding wolf is eliminated. Hold off on hunting until more is known.

Edward Heavy, Montana Trapper's Association, said at the organization's meeting in Lewistown they had voted that they are opposed to trapping wolves until there is need.

Lisa Upson, Natural Resources Council, said she appreciates the wolf advisory council's efforts and FWPs time and efforts. NRC supports the concept of the season, but does not feel the time is now. NRC urges the state to be independent of federal criteria. Social carnivores require a different approach than other wildlife. Use non-lethal deterrents. If Montana did nothing in two years, we would have less than Idaho - wolf season is premature. Urged denial of the proposal.

Gary Carvajal is in favor of the proposal.

Mac Minard, MOGA, said that MOGA passed a position statement in response to legislation that has been proposed that supports where FWP and the Commission is headed. Also, they felt it appropriate to get started with the season structure.

Tim Ravndal said it is wonderful to have an opportunity to trap. Must move forward with a positive solid plan. Use caution. Protect private property. Monitoring of the wolves is important. Must develop a structure.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

12. 2008-2009 Moose, Sheep and Goat Seasons and HD Boundaries – Tentative.

Regions 1 and 5 - Moose

No proposed changes

Action: Colton moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Regions 1 and 5 tentative Moose regulations as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 2 - Moose

HD 210 – Convert antlerless moose licenses to Either Sex.

HD 211 - Eliminate antlerless moose licenses.

HD 214 – Convert antlerless moose licenses to Antlered Bull.

HD 215 - Convert antlerless moose licenses to Either Sex

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the Region 2 tentative Moose regulations as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Region 3 - Moose

HD 302 – Reduce antlerless licenses from 5 to 1 and antlered bull licenses from 5 to 4.

HD 334 – Adjust season and license structure to the following:

Sep 15 – Nov 30 5 Either Sex (334-00)

Nov 15 – Dec 15 6 Antlerless (334-11)

HD 390 - Implement new hunting district 390 (West Big Belt Mountains). Two Antlered Bull licenses (390-20) recommended.

Action: Vermillion moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Region 3 tentative Moose regulations as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Regions 4 and 6 - Moose

HD 600 - Implement new hunting district 600 (Hi Line). Two Either Sex licenses (600-20) recommended.

Action: Doll moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the Regions 4 and 6 tentative Moose regulations as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Regions 2 and 4 – Sheep

No proposed changes

Action: Workman moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Regions 2 and 4 tentative Sheep proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried.

Regions 1, 3, 5 and 6 – Sheep

HD 121 – Implement 10 adult ewe licenses (121-30).

HD 301 – Re-open and implement 5 any ram licenses

HDs 500, 501 and 502 – Adjust boundaries of HDs 500 and 501 and create new HD 502. Season would be unlimited license sale with harvest quota of 2 legal rams.

HDs 620 and 680 – Expand HD 680 Either Sex licenses to be valid in HD 620 also.

HD 622 - Increase the size of HD 622 by incorporating deer/elk HD 631 and implement 5 adult ewe licenses valid in Mickey and Brandon Buttes area (portion of HD west of the Renolds Hill Road).

Action: Colton moved and Workman seconded the motion to approve the proposals with the amendment to open the sheep archery season ten days before the regular season opener excluding HD301. Motion carried.

Regions 2 and 3 - Goats

HD 212 – Propose to close district to all goat hunting.

HD 321 – Propose to close district to all goat hunting.

HD 322 – Propose to close district to all goat hunting.

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the tentative Goat proposals as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

13. 2008-2009 Black Bear Seasons, HD Boundaries and Quotas – Tentative.

No proposed changes

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the proposed Black Bear seasons as recommended by the Department.

Gary Carvajal asked the Commission to consider a bear season that coincides with deer and elk season.

Mac Minard said the survey results were encouraging.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

14. 2008-2009 Game Damage Permit Authorizations – Tentative.

No proposed changes.

Action: Doll moved and Colton seconded the motion to approve the proposed Game Damage Permits as recommended by the Department. Motion carried

15. Resolution on Delisting and Funding for Grizzly Bears.

This resolution was requested by the Commission at the last meeting. It will be presented to the public for comment for 30 days.

Resolution of the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission

Whereas, the people of Montana have supported recovery of the grizzly bear since the species was listed as “threatened” under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) through numerous actions that have protected or enhanced grizzly bear habitat and reduced grizzly bear mortality, and

Whereas, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP), on behalf of the people of Montana has adopted management plans and conservation strategies for grizzly bears in the state and is the lead agency responsible for day-to-day conservation of the species in Montana, and

Whereas, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which is responsible for administration of the ESA, has determined that grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem compose a distinct population segment (DPS) which is warranted for, and has been, removed from the list of threatened species, and

Whereas, the USFWS has committed to completing an analysis to determine what, if any, other grizzly bear DPSs exist in the contiguous 48 states and determining the appropriate status of those DPSs by the end of 2008 through a process that includes the affected state wildlife agencies, and

Whereas, the people of the United States, through Congress’ adoption of the ESA, have imposed requirements for grizzly bear conservation that should rightfully be funded by the people of the United States, and

Whereas, it is essential that FWP be able to continue to monitor the Northern Continental Divide Grizzly Bear population to determine the trend of the population following the population census completed in 2004 in order to gather the scientific data needed to delist this population;

Now therefore be it resolved by the FWP Commission that:

The Director shall communicate to the Director of the USFWS and other appropriate entities the FWP Commission’s demand that the USFWS fulfill the commitment to complete the DPS analysis and status review for grizzly bears in the contiguous 48 states by December 31, 2008, and

Be it further resolved that:

The Director shall communicate to the Montana Congressional Delegation the FWP Commission’s belief that significant and sustained federal funding to support state management of grizzly bears is both necessary and appropriate, in view of the national interest in this species.

Draft - December 20, 2007

Action: Colton moved and Vermillion seconded the motion to approve the Grizzly Bear Resolution and present it for public comment.

Lisa Upson, Natural Resources Council, said the state hasn’t done anything for bear habitat. The first paragraph is inaccurate as there has been increased mortality rates and killing of bears. Asserting political pressure is not acceptable.

Tim Ravndal expressed support for the resolution.

Chris Smith, FWP Chief of Staff, stated there was a relatively large number of bears killed this year, some illegally, but primarily in conflict situations. The intent of the first paragraph was that FWP has purchased a number of conservation easements and coordinated other habitat efforts. There are specialists in communities to educate the public toward reduction of conflicts, and the Department has worked diligently to reduce grizzly bear mortality. Fines have been increased for illegal killing of bears. The attempt was to make it clear that FWP supports delisting, and asks USFWS to complete the delisting process in the timeframe they said they would. It was not the intent to assert political pressure.

Action on Motion: Motion carried.

16. Open Microphone – Public Opportunity to Address Additional FWP Issues. There were none.

Action: Workman moved and Colton seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Steve Doherty, Chairman

M. Jeff Hagener, Director